

A Roadmap for Central Avenue



A decision-making guide for Dunkirk and Fredonia



School of Architecture and Planning
UB Regional Institute

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Our central **Dunkirk**

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Introduction

A vision to connect and strengthen the communities of Dunkirk and Fredonia

Focusing investment along Central Avenue—the three mile corridor connecting the City of Dunkirk and the Village of Fredonia—will build new excitement among residents, increase private sector investment, build a lasting partnership between Dunkirk and Fredonia, and raise awareness of the unique assets that both communities have to offer to visitors. This roadmap document is meant to be a guide for community leaders that want to develop projects along the Central Avenue corridor.

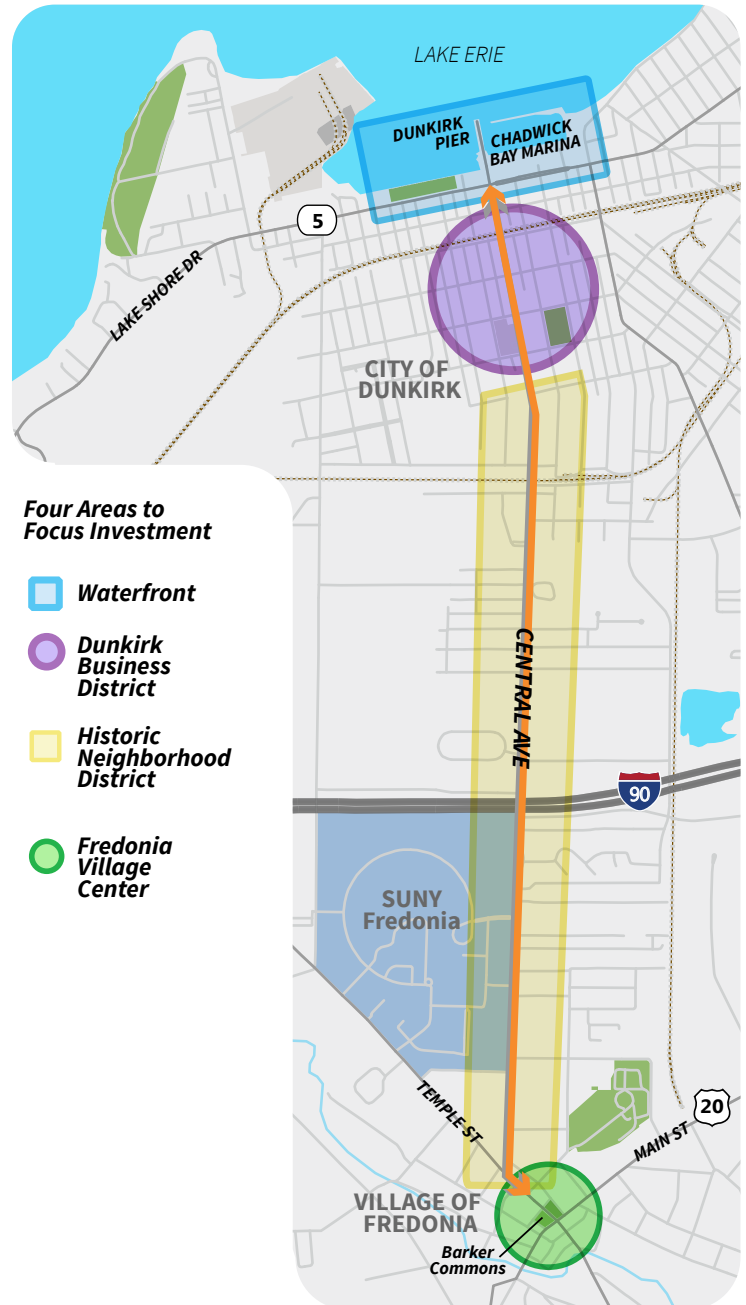
Overview of Process

Developing a long-term vision for the Central Avenue corridor

This document was developed with input from stakeholders from Chautauqua County, the City of Dunkirk, the Village of Fredonia, and SUNY Fredonia in addition to several past plans and strategy documents. Prominent themes and ideas were distilled and summarized to inform long term planning principles for Central Avenue that can be applied in four distinct investment areas.

The Central Avenue corridor connects Dunkirk and Fredonia

Central Avenue directly connects the historic village center of Fredonia, the SUNY Fredonia campus, Dunkirk's central business district and the waterfront on Chadwick Bay. The corridor is uniquely positioned within Chautauqua County to take advantage of many connections to the region as a whole. It is approximately one mile from New York State Thruway exit 59 and terminates at two regionally significant transportation routes—the Seaway Trail and NY State Route 5.



Related Planning

The 12 documents below were reviewed for recommendations relevant to Central Avenue and the prominent themes were summarized.

Related planning to date

Waterfront Enhancement Planning, July 1992

Chadwick Bay Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, August 1998

Chautauqua County Branding Development Marketing Action Plan, January 2009

Visualizing Our Options Guidebook, June 2009

Concord Grape Belt Heritage Area Management Plan, August 2010

Chautauqua County Comprehensive Plan, April 2011

Chautauqua County Greenway Plan, April 2012

Chautauqua County Health Network, Walkability Survey Summary Report, October 2013

City of Dunkirk Lakefront Connector Trails, April 2014

Northern Chautauqua County Intermunicipal Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, June 2015

A Strategy for Capitalizing on the Athenex Phenomenon, April 2016

Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation, Local Economic Development Strategic Plan, 2016-2017

What the plans say about main streets, design and development

Common themes and recommendations include:

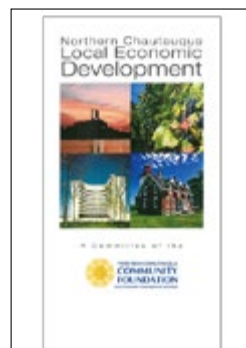
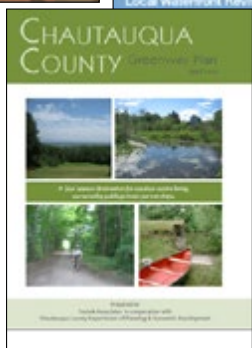
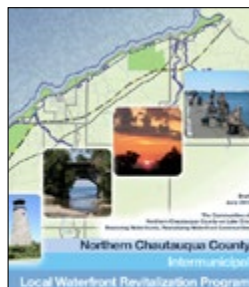
Focusing economic development efforts on existing historic corridors and downtowns to create vibrant and pedestrian oriented places.

Reinforcing the authenticity of existing historic downtowns and commercial corridors by adhering to context sensitive design principles.

Capitalizing on the waterfront as an economic driver that can fuel local businesses.

Strengthening access to recreational activities such as fishing, biking, boating and festivals.

Connecting the network of shared trails at the waterfront and making access to the water safer for pedestrians and cyclists.



Branding to build collaboration and bring the community together

Defining a brand gives the community a sense of identity and excitement that can help foster collaboration, engage in conversations and spur action. Dunkirk and Fredonia are sister communities that possess their own unique assets and strength that together, make a stronger, connected community.

The Central Connection brand celebrates the relationship these two communities have enjoyed for years while providing a platform to communicate those shared assets, strengths and collaborations to a variety of audiences.

Our central connection to
our past & our present
our arts & our culture
our trails & our tastes
our neighborhoods & our businesses
our diversity & our likeness
our knowledge & our wisdom
our innovation & our insights
our families & our ancestors
our visitors & our residents
our music & our muses
our wine & our water



Examples of applying the brand



Celebrating the shared connections of the Dunkirk Fredonia community while highlighting the unique characteristics and offerings of each. Focus is on Central Avenue as the physical connector.

Posters/Print Material



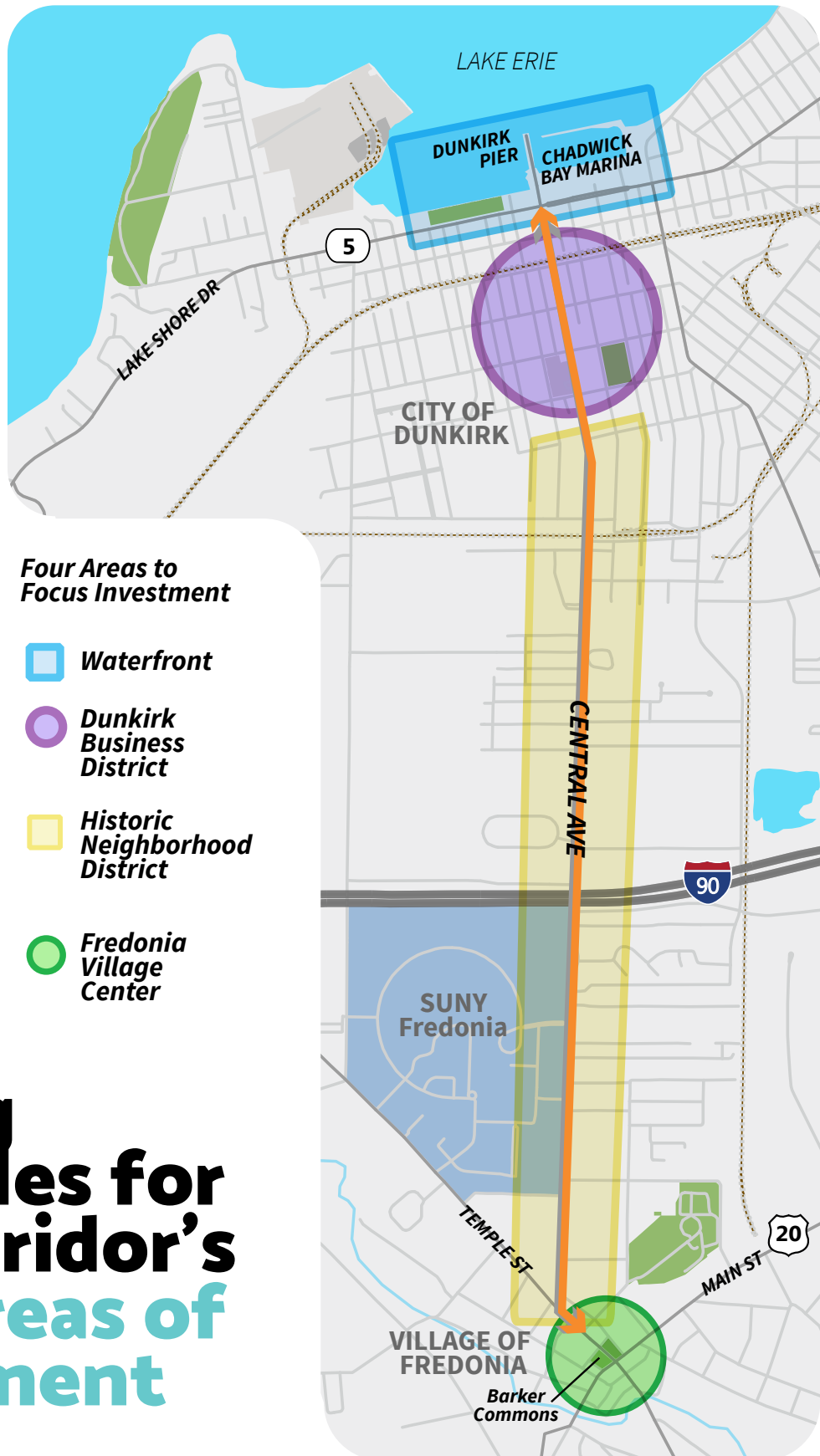
Street Banners



Guiding Principles for the Corridor's Four Areas of Investment

Four Areas to Focus Investment

-  **Waterfront**
-  **Dunkirk Business District**
-  **Historic Neighborhood District**
-  **Fredonia Village Center**



Waterfront

1. Promote Maritime Heritage

From its role in the War of 1812 to its present day role as a regional boating and fishing destination, Chadwick Bay has a rich maritime heritage. This heritage should be celebrated and leveraged to create a sense of place that is unique and can attract new visitors to Dunkirk. Developments should find ways to tell stories about the people and places that contributed to the history of the bay and the development of the city of Dunkirk while connecting people to modern day business and recreational activities.

2. Strengthen links to pathways and regional trail system

Dunkirk's location within a regional trail network is one of the City's greatest assets. Fully developing the local trail network and improving connection to the greater regional network will draw new visitors to the City and provide efficient and healthy transportation options for residents—both of which can provide new opportunities for local businesses. Developments should focus on connecting existing trails, highly visible wayfinding for visitors and the promotion of businesses that support tourism, running and biking.

3. Enhance recreational and cultural opportunities

Dunkirk's location on Lake Erie, availability of land and buildings that can be developed, and diverse population create an extraordinary economic development opportunity. Providing more cultural and recreational opportunities along the waterfront will set Dunkirk apart from other regional destinations and build a hub of activity that will attract visitors from the surrounding communities and the region as a whole.

Example of a Potential Waterfront Project: Dunkirk Pier Improvements

Improvements to a portion of the Dunkirk Pier would add new life to this regional asset in between concerts and festivals. The project could include mix of new recreational activities—such as moveable seating, interpretive signs, large scale games, art installations, amenities for anglers and new lighting— while preserving existing fishing and boating access.



Dunkirk Business District & Fredonia Village Center

1. Celebrate history, arts & diversity

Dunkirk and Fredonia's cultural diversity is among their greatest strengths. Families and students from across the world made these communities their home, bringing with them new traditions, goods and cuisine. This diversity should be prominently represented in Dunkirk's central business district and Fredonia's village center. New developments should focus on providing opportunities for residents, students and local business owners to share their history and customs.

2. Mix uses of retail and housing to support a vibrant, walkable community

Developments at each end of Central Avenue should mix uses, such as housing and retail, to create an ecosystem for new businesses to thrive. Mixing housing with other uses provides predictable demand for local businesses, adds around the clock activity to city streets and creates a more walkable and safe neighborhood. While Central Ave is already home to many interesting buildings, there are still many opportunities to fill in vacant buildings and lots with new mixed-use developments that will support a vibrant business district and draw new customers to local businesses.

3. Create tourist destinations

The location of these two communities along the Lake Erie waterfront and the Seaway Trail provides a unique advantage to attract visitors. Developments at each end of the corridor should include activities that cater to those visiting for recreational activities. These activities can be supported by additional signage along the waterfront and in Fredonia's village center, as well as improvements to the Route 5 and Central Ave intersection that will allow pedestrians and bicyclists to safely travel between the waterfront and the rest of Central Avenue.

Example of a Potential Village Center Project: Barker Commons Improvements

Modest improvements would add structure to the park and reinforce the historic character of this park in the heart of Fredonia. Improvements could include new crosswalks for safe access to the park, minimal landscaping and fencing at the park edge, gateway posts to mark the park entrances, and branded banners along Temple Street running through the park.

Current Conditions



Concept Design



Current Conditions



Concept Design



Historic Neighborhoods

1. Encourage a healthy, active community

Residents in the historic neighborhoods between Dunkirk and Fredonia have many amenities within walking and cycling distance. Future improvements to Central Avenue should enhance safety for residents and visitors who want to walk and cycle for transportation or recreation. Improvements might include bicycle lanes, traffic slowing measures, crosswalks and sidewalks repairs.



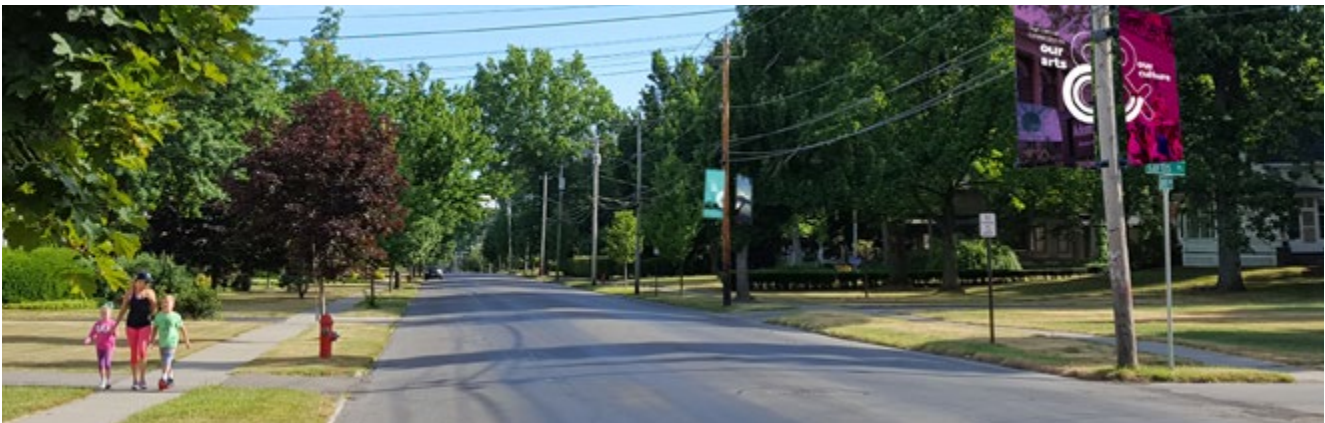
2. Preserve historic character of neighborhoods

Any new developments within these unique neighborhoods should have minimal long term impact on homes and their historic character.

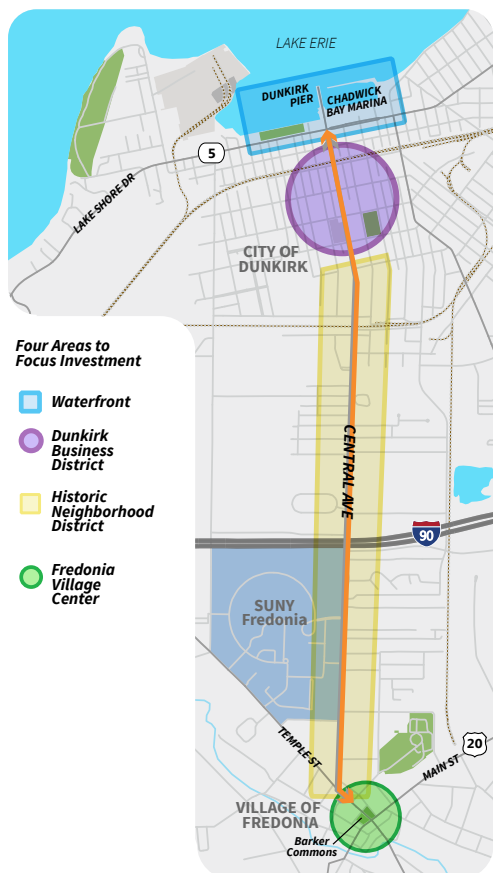


3. Strengthen the brand's presence throughout the corridor

Central Avenue is the key to strengthening the connection between Dunkirk and Fredonia. Branded reminders—such as light pole banners—should be used throughout the corridor to provide a consistent visual connection between the two communities. The same brand for the corridor should also be used on the waterfront, Dunkirk's business district and Fredonia's village center to create a unified and distinctive sense of place along the whole corridor.



Steps to developing a new project



Pick a District



Define Project



Build Consensus



Identify Funding



Apply for Funding



Implementation

Projects in each district along Central Ave will have their own unique requirements. Start by considering the guiding principles outlined on the previous pages.

Determine the overall goal for the project and the best way to accomplish the goal. Projects might include capital improvements, new programs or new policies.

Discuss the project with local and regional stakeholders that will have a vested interest or can play an advisory role in the project. Understanding their unique views and needs early on will ensure a smooth implementation process.

Connect those planning the project to the correct funding mechanisms. Each funding source has its own specific requirements that may affect the design of the project. See the list of some potential NYS funding sources on the next page.

Apply for funding. For state sources of funding most funding can be applied for through the annual Consolidated Funding Application (CFA), but other sources, such as federal or foundation grants, may be available at various times throughout the year.

Assemble or hire a project team that can manage the delivery of the project and engage stakeholders throughout the process.

Funding Examples

Target Activity	Source	Eligible Recipients	Local Match	Application Method
Improving buildings and streetscape	Traditional New York Main Street Renovations	Dunkirk, Fredonia, non-profit organization	25%	NYS Consolidated Funding Application
Improving or constructing one anchor building	New York Main Street Downtown Anchor Project	Dunkirk, Fredonia, non-profit organization	25%	NYS Consolidated Funding Application
Technical Assistance	New York Main Street Technical Assistance	Dunkirk, Fredonia, non-profit organization	5%	Apply on a rolling basis until funds are depleted
Planning, feasibility, design, marketing, or construction	Local Waterfront Revitalization Program	Dunkirk, Chautauqua County	50%	NYS Consolidated Funding Application
Capital based economic development projects	Empire State Development Grant	Businesses, non-profits, Dunkirk, Fredonia, Chautauqua County, Chautauqua County Industrial Development Agency	80%	NYS Consolidated Funding Application
Attracting new businesses or growing existing businesses	Excelsior Jobs Program	Businesses	Job creation thresholds	NYS Consolidated Funding Application
Tourism Marketing	Market NY	Businesses, Dunkirk, Fredonia, Non-profits	25%	NYS Consolidated Funding Application
Park improvements, park planning, or historic preservation	NY Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation	Dunkirk, Fredonia, non-profit organization	25%	NYS Consolidated Funding Application

**Prepared for the City of Dunkirk
and the Village of Fredonia**



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